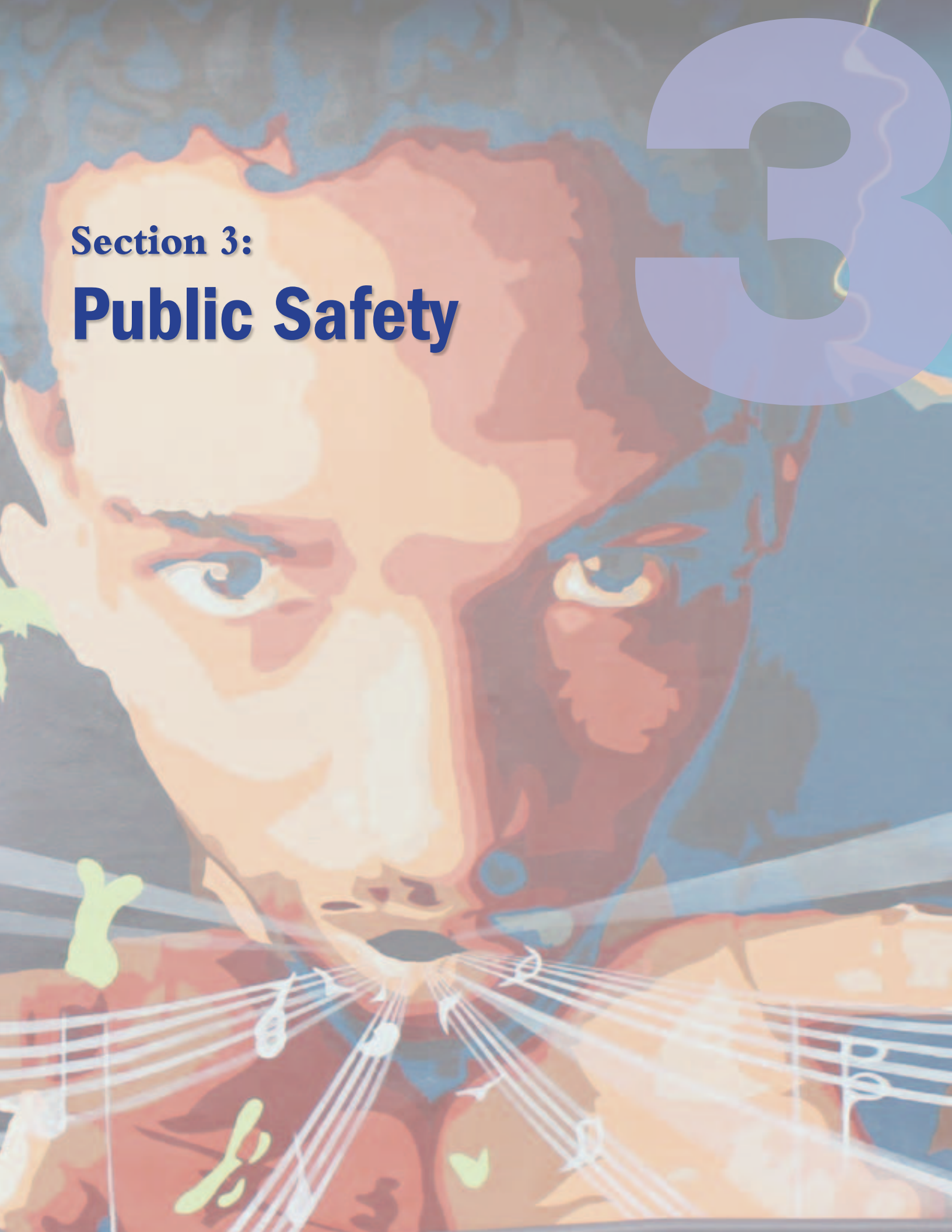


# 3

**Section 3:**

## **Public Safety**







## Section 3:

# Public Safety

**Protecting public safety is central to the DYRS mission. The agency is dedicated to reducing the likelihood that a youth will re-offend, either while in DYRS custody or upon release, and all DYRS programs and services are designed to help achieve this goal.**

The strategies that DYRS employs to promote public safety include:

- **Supervision and monitoring of all youth in DYRS custody:** Youth placed in secure detention facilities are supervised at all times. Youth placed within the community are regularly supervised and monitored by DYRS service providers and staff.
- **Rehabilitative services:** Whether placed in a secure facility or within the community, youth receive comprehensive services designed to promote positive development and reduce the likelihood for re-offending.
- **Electronic monitoring program:** At any given time, 150 to 175 DYRS youth who reside in the community wear electronic Global Positioning System (GPS) devices, which track their movements and alert officials when the youth is not where he or she is supposed to be.
- **Response to youth on abscondence:** DYRS has an abscondence unit that, along with the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), goes directly into the community to locate and return youth on abscondence. The abscondence unit also deploys to youth who have or may have attempted to abscond, with the goal of verbally communicating with the

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### Praise for DYRS

*“Public safety is best protected when juvenile justice agencies combine efforts to hold youth accountable with creative prevention efforts and with consistent services and positive supports. The most effective juvenile justice systems offer a broad menu of interventions that are managed collaboratively with law enforcement, social services, schools, employers, and neighborhoods. This is exactly what DYRS does, which is why the agency is increasingly seen as a model by juvenile justice experts nationwide.”*

—Jeffrey A. Butts, Ph.D., Executive Director, Research and Evaluation Center, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York

Testimony to the Council of the District of Columbia, Committee on Human Services.  
September 23, 2010

troubled youth and convincing him or her to return to the court-appointment placement. The abscondence unit, with help from the electronic monitoring program, responds to all critical incidents within the community.

- **Structured Decision Making risk-assessment tool:** Placement decisions are guided by a validated, data-driven Structured Decision Making (SDM) tool that assesses a youth's risk to the community based on factors such as offense severity, prior offenses, school discipline, and peer relationships. Each youth for whom commitment is recommended undergoes a mandatory SDM assessment.
- **Recidivism assessment:** DYRS measures re-offense rates for committed youth, using this information to identify areas for improvement with respect to public safety outcomes.
- **Outcome-based performance measures:** The agency evaluates its own performance with respect to public safety using data-driven assessment tools, such as YouthStat and Performance-based Standards (PbS), and uses this information to identify areas for improvement.
- **Sentinel reviews:** The agency conducts a thorough case review of any homicide incidents involving DYRS committed youth, whether as an alleged victim or suspect, to review the care given to each youth in order to determine (1) whether key agency protocols were followed and (2) what the agency can learn from the youth's particular case about how DYRS can better care for all youth committed to its custody.

### Overview of Section

This section presents information about the DYRS programs and services aimed at promoting public safety. This section includes the following information:

- ▲ Public safety initiatives and accomplishments in FY2011
- ▲ Public safety outcomes within the community
- ▲ Public safety initiatives and outcomes within DYRS facilities
- ▲ Looking forward to 2012

# Public Safety: FY2011 Initiatives and Accomplishments

In FY2011, DYRS launched a number of initiatives aimed at improving public safety. Recent public safety initiatives and accomplishments include:

- **Expanding the Electronic Monitoring Program:** DYRS dramatically increased the number of youth who receive GPS monitoring, from zero youth in FY2009, to 26 youth in FY2010, to 570 youth in FY2011. The agency is also working to improve GPS technology and enhance how DYRS uses this technology.
- **Implementing security upgrades at New Beginnings:** New Beginnings implemented a number of security upgrades during FY2011, including adding more monitors to the control room, initiating a Roll Call process, developing an airport transportation safety policy, establishing a Manager on Duty position to enhance command and control, installing additional lighting and removing obstructions around the front gate, and establishing a Safety and Security Council.
- **Increasing inter-District partnerships and collaborations:** DYRS is collaborating with partner public safety agencies and service providers to solve common problems involving delinquency and crime. To improve monitoring and supervision, DYRS has launched data-sharing initiatives with agencies such as MPD, the DC Office of the Attorney General (OAG), the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), and the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA). DYRS sends a weekly report to MPD identifying youth with a history of committing serious offenses. This report includes the youth's existing placement and the date that his or her DYRS commitment is set to expire.
- **Improving responses to absconders:** DYRS has partnered with MPD and the Department of Corrections to conduct several coordinated searches throughout the District in an effort to locate youth on abscondence. GPS monitors, combined with a reporting system that DYRS implemented in partnership with the District's Office of Unified Communications, has helped make DYRS' responses to absconders more swift and immediate and reduced the number of youth on abscondence to its lowest rate in three years. The abscondence rate in FY2011 was 6.1%, a 25% decrease since FY2010. On average, 17 fewer youth are on abscondence per day in FY2011 than in FY2010.
- **Participating in public safety walk-throughs in the community:** Under the leadership of Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice Paul Quander, DYRS joined MPD, government agencies, and community partners to conduct several public safety walk-throughs in selected areas of the District. The walk-throughs resulted in identifying action steps to deter criminal activity, better the appearance of the community, and improve the overall quality of life for residents.
- **Conducting a mandatory call-in for DYRS' 17-20 year-old population:** DYRS, in collaboration with MPD, convened all young adults committed to DYRS for a review of the agency's expectations and services.
- **Improving performance at YSC and New Beginnings:** Based on PbS measures, the Youth Services Center (YSC) and New Beginnings each improved to a Level II facility, meaning that 85% of their 'critical outcome' measures are at or above the field average.
- **Enhancing transitions and community-based linkages:** DC YouthLink has enhanced the way that DYRS links youth to community-based services aimed at reducing re-offending and ensuring successful transition back to the community.



# Public Safety in the Community

Protecting the safety and well-being of the community is central to DYRS' mission. This section presents information on three of the measures that the agency uses to assess its performance with respect to public safety: recidivism rates; homicide incidents involving DYRS youth; and data concerning youth on abscondence.

## Recidivism

### Why Report Recidivism?

One way to measure the agency's performance toward meeting its public safety mission is to determine how many of the youth committed to the agency are found 'involved,' or guilty, of a new offense. This is the 'recidivism rate.' Recidivism rates are useful indicators because there is an intuitive relationship between what brought the youth into the system—his/her committing offense—and one key outcome by which success is measured: whether the youth has offended again.

### Defining Recidivism

Recidivism may be a common outcome indicator for juvenile justice agencies, but there is significant variation in how different jurisdictions define the measurement. The first major source of differences concerns the type of contact that a youth must have with the juvenile justice system to have 'recidivated.' The two most common interpretations are:

- **Re-arrest**—a youth is arrested and charged with a new offense.
- **Re-conviction**—a youth is found involved or guilty of a new offense in a court of law.

In October 2009, the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA), in a report commissioned by the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), concluded that:

*...[Several] options are available for defining recidivism. We strongly recommend, however, that all studies of recidivism include adjudication or conviction. Adjudication/conviction includes all cases in which the justice system process has reached a conclusion regarding guilt, made by an independent fact-finder. By this point the number of false positives has been minimized. The Recidivism Work Group has found that there is widespread consensus on this measure, while none of the other measures are free of controversy.<sup>1</sup>*

The second area of common disagreement is how long the review period for re-offending should be. To strike a balance between comprehensiveness and timeliness, DYRS reports recidivism rates for youth who have been in a community-based

placement for one year. According to a study conducted by the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice in 2005<sup>2</sup> and quoted in the 2006 OJJDP<sup>3</sup> paper, which compared the recidivism measurement methods across different states, over three quarters of states reporting statewide recidivism rates use the one-year standard.

Combining the interpretation of re-offending as a re-conviction in a court of law with the one year time frame, the formal definition of recidivism used in this and other DYRS reports is:

*A committed youth has recidivated if he or she is convicted in Washington, D.C. of a new juvenile or adult offense which occurred within one year of being placed in or returned to the community.*

### Data Collection Method

Data on new juvenile and adult offenses for DYRS committed youth is collected from the District's JUSTIS database. JUSTIS is administered by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), which acts as a clearing house for criminal justice data for District stakeholders, including MPD, OAG, and the DC Superior Court. JUSTIS' conviction data pulls from the DC Superior Court's Information system, Courtview.

The JUSTIS file for each youth committed to DYRS is individually reviewed after the youth has been in the community for a full year. For each youth, the following information is recorded:

- Total number of arrests occurring within one year of release to a community setting.
- Full jacket information for the most serious jacket, including offense type, date of offense, date of disposition, and outcome.
- Notes on the outcome of all additional jackets, including dates and most serious offense.

'Most serious jacket' is defined as the jacket with the most serious offense and highest level of disposition. If, for example, a youth is convicted for robbery in one jacket and misdemeanor drug possession in a second jacket, the robbery data would be included. If the robbery jacket is dismissed, then the drug jacket would be included in the re-conviction recidivism calculation and the robbery jacket in the re-arrest recidivism calculation.

In addition to the jacket data, DYRS also includes basic demographic information – date of birth, race, and gender – in the recidivism database. The date of the youth's original commitment and the most serious offense leading to that commitment are also listed.

DYRS staff includes placement data for each committed youth in order to identify the time when youth returned to the community and to associate outcomes with particular treatments. The research team identifies the initial placement of each youth after he/she had been committed to DYRS, and the date of release from that particular facility. This allows the agency to measure a one-year period of time in a community placement, regardless of the youth's initial placement. So long as the youth is in secure confinement or at a residential treatment center (RTC), the recidivism 'clock' does not start.

Once nearly all youth have been back in the community for one year, DYRS runs the statistics to determine the rate of recidivism for committed youth. Final re-conviction numbers are analyzed in total (all committed youth convicted of a new offense within one year of community placement), as well as by gender, race, age, placement, and offense type.

### **Challenges with Collecting and Interpreting Recidivism Data**

**Jurisdictional Constraints:** The DYRS recidivism study reports on re-convictions that occur within the jurisdiction of the District of Columbia. This is consistent with the practice of juvenile justice agencies in neighboring jurisdictions and

nationwide. DYRS is currently working with other District stakeholders and the neighboring jurisdictions, however, to find ways for their systems to work together so that the District can have reliable or consistent individual level offense data for arrests that occur in other jurisdictions.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Difficulty in Establishing Appropriate Comparisons:**

Finding an appropriate group against which to benchmark the District's juvenile recidivism rate can be challenging. The intuitive comparison would be with neighboring jurisdictions, Maryland and Virginia. The unique status and structure of the District, however, makes this comparison tenuous. Recidivism rates reported by Maryland and Virginia combine the outcomes of any youth who has been placed on probation, which the states operate, as well as youth committed to the state. The DYRS recidivism study, by contrast, does not include youth on probation because Court Social Services (CSS), not DYRS, has jurisdiction over these young people. The result of this difference is that the District's recidivism analysis starts with a cohort of youth that has a more significant delinquent background and is therefore more likely to re-offend. Other subtle differences in the laws governing juvenile commitment, such as the conditions under which a youth can be waived to the adult system, also make comparisons difficult.

## **Pathways to Desistance**

In March 2011, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) released a Juvenile Justice Factsheet with highlights from the Pathways to Desistance Study, which is a longitudinal study of serious adolescent offenders. The Pathways Study is different from other research that has been done because it is a large, collaborative, multidisciplinary project that has followed 1,354 serious juvenile offenders aged 14 -18 for seven years after their conviction. This study has compiled the most comprehensive data set currently available about juvenile offenders and their lives in late adolescence and early adulthood.

### **Key Findings of the Pathways to Desistance Study:**

- Most youth who commit felonies greatly reduce their offending over time.
- Longer stays in juvenile institutions do not reduce recidivism.
- In the period after incarceration, community-based supervision is effective for youth who have committed serious offenses.
- Substance abuse treatment reduces both substance use and criminal offending for a limited time.

Citation: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency. March 2011. "Highlights From Pathways to Desistance: A Longitudinal Study of Serious Adolescent Offenders." *Fact Sheet*

## Findings

The overall re-conviction rate for the 1,768 youth committed to DYRS between FY2004 and FY2009 was 35%. Over that five year period, roughly two-thirds of committed youth did not recidivate within one year of their release to the community. During this period, the high point for recidivism was the FY2008 cohort of committed youth, 45% of whom were found guilty of a new offense committed within one year of a community placement. This rate has decreased in every subsequent cohort group since.

**Gender:** There is a significant difference in the recidivism rates between males and females committed to DYRS. While 38% of males re-offended within a year of community placement, only 11% of females were convicted of a new crime.

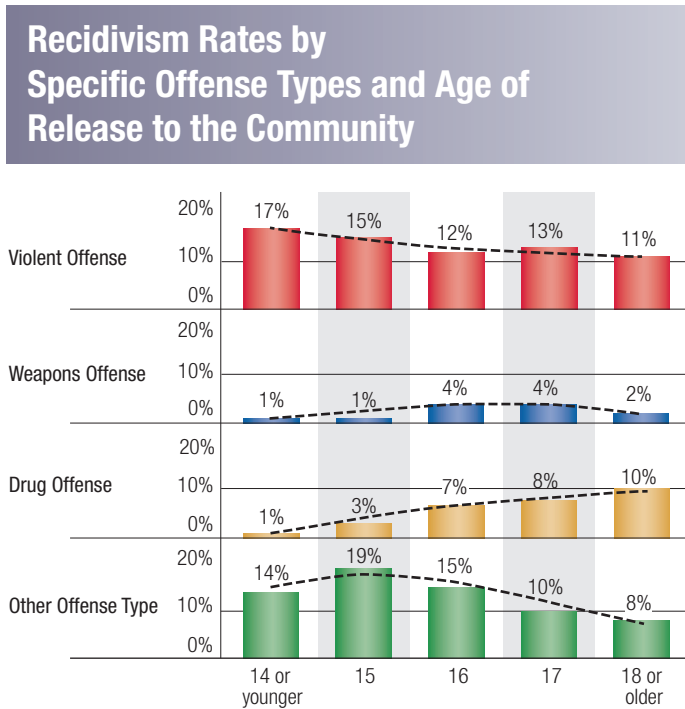
**Race:** Ninety-seven percent of all youth reviewed in this study are African-American. Likewise, African-American youth made up 97% of committed youth with new re-convictions. Latino youth account for 3% of the commitments, while white and Asian youth make up less than 1%.

The recidivism rates for African-American youth (35%) and Latino youth (38%) were comparable. None of the four white or Asian youth recidivated.

**Age:** The average age at the time of commitment was 16 years old. Almost 75% of all youth were between ages 16 and 18 upon initial commitment to DYRS. Between FY2004 and FY2010, the recidivism rate for young people aged 18 or older was 5% lower than for younger youth. This finding is consistent with other research that indicates that older adolescents tend to ‘age out’ of criminal behavior.<sup>5</sup>

Another noteworthy trend is that the rate of re-offending for violent crimes diminishes as youth get older. Youth age 14 and younger have been 50% more likely to be re-convicted of a violent offense than young people age 18 or older. Conversely, older youth are increasingly likely to be re-convicted of a drug offense as compared to younger youth.

**Initial Placement:** Upon commitment, DYRS youth are generally placed at New Beginnings, at an RTC, or in a community based setting, based on their treatment needs and risk. Starting in FY2009, these placement decisions were informed by risk assessments using the SDM risk-assessment tool. Prior to that time, the decision of what level of restrictiveness was best for a given youth was generally the product of individual decision making, guided by the agency mission to put youth in the “least restrictive, most homelike environment consistent with public safety.” Because a youth may have several different types of placements while committed to DYRS, identifying the particular impacts of any one program cannot be accomplished cleanly. Nevertheless, in reporting recidivism rates the agency does home in on each youth’s initial placement upon commitment. A youth’s initial placement is of particular importance, as it speaks to DYRS’ initial decision making process regarding youth newly committed to the agency.





## Re-Conviction and Re-Arrest Rates FY2004-FY2010

	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010*	Total
<b>Re-Conviction</b>	31%	26%	20%	39%	45%	42%	37%	35%
<b>Re-Arrest</b>	48%	37%	34%	52%	62%	56%	59%	51%

\*FY2010 data reported only for youth with initial community-based placements. Data for youth placed in out-of-community placements is pending.

## Recidivism by Age at Time of Placement in Community FY2004-FY2010

	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010*	Total
<b>Over 18</b>	35%	18%	9%	31%	39%	40%	46%	31%
<b>Under 18</b>	30%	29%	22%	41%	46%	42%	36%	36%

\*FY2010 data reported only for youth with initial community-based placements. Data for youth placed in out-of-community placements is pending.

## Recidivism Rates by Initial Placement Type FY2004-FY2010

	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010*	Total
<b>Re-Conviction</b>								
Community	40%	23%	20%	38%	45%	43%	37%	36%
Oak Hill**	29%	26%	18%	45%	51%	45%	-	34%
Residential Treatment Center	26%	30%	25%	27%	35%	39%	-	32%
<b>Re-Arrest</b>								
Community	65%	34%	32%	51%	62%	58%	59%	52%
Oak Hill**	44%	44%	31%	60%	71%	60%	-	50%
Residential Treatment Center	34%	37%	54%	27%	51%	51%	-	44%

\* FY2010 data reported only for youth with initial community-based placements. Data for youth placed in out-of-community placements is pending.

\*\* In FY2009, 12 youth began their treatment at Oak Hill, then transferred to New Beginnings when it was opened in June 2009. Eight other youth were placed initially at New Beginnings.

## Recidivism Reporting Cohorts

There is a time lag between date of commitment and date of reporting that is a natural product of the rehabilitative needs of youth in the agency's care. This can be demonstrated by looking at three potential paths for youth committed to the agency on the same day (January 1, 2008):

- **Youth 1: Initial placement in a community-based facility**

For a youth placed in the community immediately after commitment, the recidivism 'clock' would begin on the first day of his commitment: January 1, 2008. His outcomes could be measured and included in the recidivism database as early as January 1, 2009, one year after commitment.

- **Youth 2: Initial placement at New Beginnings**

The second youth, who may have been committed for a more serious crime, is initially placed in secure care such as New Beginnings Youth Development Center. He receives treatment there for 9 months and is then placed back in the community on October 1,

2009. For this youth, the recidivism outcomes would be available for review on October 1, 2010.

- **Youth 3: Initial placement at an RTC**

The final example is a youth who has been placed initially at an RTC. Although this youth is also committed on January 1, 2008, his date of release from the RTC is not until December 1, 2008, and even then he may need treatment at another facility before returning home. If he transitions back to independent living in the community on June 1, 2010, recidivism will not be measured until June 1, 2011, more than three years after the date of initial commitment.

As a general practice, in order to have as complete an analysis as possible for its recidivism study, while also considering the importance of timeliness of reporting, DYRS does not release its recidivism outcomes until the agency has full recidivism information for at least 95% of a fiscal year cohort.

### NOTE ON FY2010 STATISTICS

At the time of publication of this Annual Performance Report, only 83% of the FY2010 cohort of youth had completed one year in a community-based setting. For this reason, the full data for FY2010 is not available. However, the agency is able to report on that portion of the cohort whose initial placement was in a community setting, since 97% of this subset have completed the full timeframe for recidivism analysis. This represents 71% of the overall FY2010 cohort.

These data have been included in order to provide the most up to date data possible. Historically, the recidivism rate of community-based youth has been comparable to the cohort as a whole.

**Comparative Recidivism Rates: Overall Rate vs. Recidivism Rate for Youth with Initial Community Placements FY2004-FY2010**

	Overall Recidivism Rate	Recidivism Rate for Youth with Initial Community Placements	Difference
FY2004	31%	40%	+ 9%
FY2005	26%	23%	- 3%
FY2006	20%	20%	0%
FY2007	39%	38%	- 1%
FY2008	45%	45%	0%
FY2009	42%	43%	+ 1%
FY2010	TBD	37%	-

**Cohort Completion Status FY2004-FY2010**

	Non-Community Initial Placement	Community	Total
FY2004	100%	100%	100%
FY2005	100%	100%	100%
FY2006	100%	100%	100%
FY2007	100%	100%	100%
FY2008	98.3%	99.5%	99.1%
FY2009	92.7%	99.6%	97.5%
FY2010	36.7%	97.5%	80.9%

**Recidivating Offense Types:** Since FY2004, 16% of DYRS youth have been re-convicted of a violent or weapons offense. For any single year, FY2008 had the highest re-conviction

rate for violent or weapons offenses (23% of youth); the initial FY2010 data, however, indicates that fewer youth are now committing these sorts of crimes.

Recidivism Rates by Recidivating Offense Type FY2004-FY2010									
Re-Conviction									
		FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010*	Grand Total
<b>Violent Offense</b>	Violent Felonies	7%	7%	5%	8%	17%	15%	9%	11%
	Violent Misdemeanors	2%	1%	1%	2%	3%	3%	4%	2%
<b>Weapons Offense</b>	Weapons	2%	3%	1%	3%	3%	4%	2%	3%
<b>Drug Offense</b>	Drug Felonies	9%	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%	1%	3%
	Drug Misdemeanors	4%	0%	2%	4%	4%	5%	4%	3%
<b>Other Offense Type</b>	Unauthorized Use of Vehicle	2%	5%	6%	7%	4%	4%	4%	5%
	Threats (Felony)	0%	1%	0%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%
	Threats (Misdemeanor)	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	Property (Felony)	0%	2%	1%	2%	3%	2%	4%	2%
	Property (Misdemeanor)	2%	1%	1%	5%	2%	4%	6%	3%
	Other	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%
	PINS	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
<b>No Re-Conviction</b>		69%	74%	80%	61%	55%	58%	63%	65%
Re-Arrest									
		FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010*	Grand Total
<b>Violent Offense</b>	Violent Felonies	10%	10%	8%	11%	18%	18%	13%	13%
	Violent Misdemeanors	3%	3%	2%	5%	5%	5%	8%	5%
<b>Weapons Offense</b>	Weapons	4%	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	5%	4%
<b>Drug Offense</b>	Drug Felonies	10%	4%	2%	3%	5%	3%	2%	4%
	Drug Misdemeanors	4%	2%	3%	4%	6%	6%	5%	5%
<b>Other Offense Type</b>	Unauthorized Use of Vehicle	7%	7%	9%	7%	6%	5%	4%	6%
	Threats (Felonies)	0%	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%
	Threats (Misdemeanors)	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%
	Property Felonies	1%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	6%	3%
	Property Misdemeanors	5%	2%	2%	8%	5%	5%	7%	5%
	Other	2%	1%	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	3%
	PINS	1%	0%	0%	0%	3%	1%	2%	1%
<b>No Re-Arrest</b>		52%	63%	66%	48%	38%	44%	41%	49%

\*FY2010 data reported only for youth with initial community-based placements. Data for youth placed in out-of-community placements is pending.

Among the most notable trends over the six cohorts were:

- A spike in violent felonies during the FY2008 and FY2009 cohorts, peaking at 17% of DYRS committed youth in FY2008 and declining ever since.
- A strong downward trend in the percent of DYRS youth re-arrested or re-convicted of drug felonies, falling from 10% in FY2004 to 3% in FY2009 and 2% among the community-placed youth in FY2010.

## Harm Reduction FY2004-FY2010

### Re-Conviction

	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010*	Grand Total
More Serious Offense	9%	12%	9%	14%	19%	17%	15%	14%
Comparable Offense	6%	3%	3%	5%	7%	8%	9%	6%
Lesser Offense	16%	11%	8%	20%	20%	17%	13%	15%
No Re-Conviction	69%	74%	80%	61%	55%	58%	63%	65%

### Re-Arrest

	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010*	Grand Total
More Serious Offense	13%	17%	13%	16%	23%	22%	25%	19%
Comparable Offense	11%	5%	7%	7%	7%	11%	10%	8%
Lesser Offense	23%	14%	14%	30%	32%	24%	23%	23%
No Re-Arrest	52%	63%	66%	48%	38%	44%	41%	49%

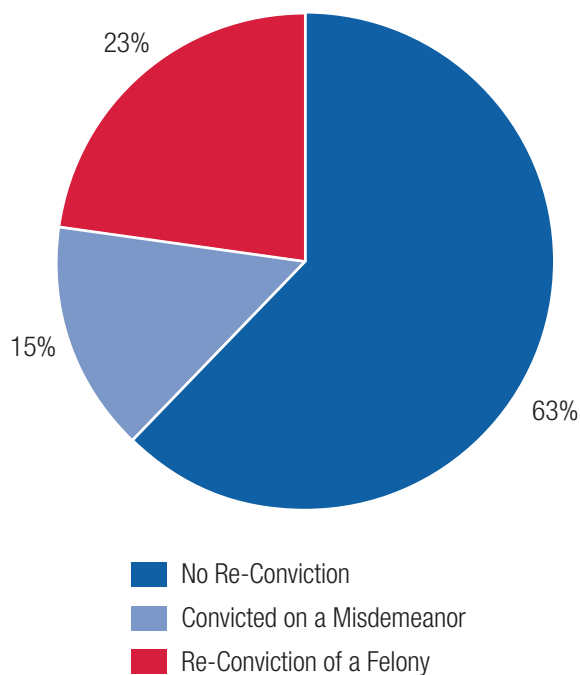
\*FY2010 data reported only for youth with initial community-based placements. Data for youth placed in out-of-community placements is pending.

**Harm Reduction:** In addition to looking at overall trends in recidivism, DYRS also looks at the change in offense types for youth who have been re-arrested or re-convicted. Using the District of Columbia's Sentencing Guidelines Manual as a base, offense types are coded and new charges are analyzed to determine if the recidivating offense is at a higher, lower, or of a similar level to the initial committing offense.

Overall, 80% of DYRS youth either were not convicted of a new offense (65%) or convicted of a less serious offense than their original committing offense (15%). Comparable offenses accounted for 6% of youth, and more serious offenses accounted for 14%.

Between FY2004 and FY2009, slightly over half (51%) of the youth committed to the agency were committed on a felony charge. Looking at this cohort of serious offenders, 63% did not recidivate within a year of placement back in the community and fewer than a quarter (23%) committed a new felony with a year of their return to the community.

### Harm Reduction: Recidivism Rates of Youth Committed to DYRS for a Felony Offense FY2004-FY2009



## Homicide Statistics

Another public safety measure is the number of DYRS committed youth involved in homicide incidents, either as an alleged perpetrator or as a victim. In an effort to assess agency performance and identify the most at-risk youth, DYRS tracks homicide data and conducts thorough reviews of all homicide events involving youth committed to its care. All fatalities of youth involved with DYRS are also reviewed by the DC Child Fatality Review Committee, which includes members from District public safety and child and family services agencies, as well as members of the public.

## Harm Reduction by Committing Offense Type FY2004-FY2010

### Re-Conviction

	Committing Offense Type			
	Violent Offense	Weapons	Drug	Other
No Re-Conviction	63%	68%	62%	66%
Re-Convicted of a Lesser Offense	24%	21%	7%	9%
Re-Convicted of a Comparable Offense	6%	4%	7%	6%
Re-Convicted of a More Serious Offense	8%	7%	24%	18%

### Re-Arrest

	Committing Offense Type			
	Violent Offense	Weapons	Drug	Other
No Re-Arrest	49%	54%	47%	50%
Re-Arrested of a Lesser Offense	32%	29%	12%	18%
Re-Arrested of a Comparable Offense	8%	6%	8%	9%
Re-Arrested of a More Serious Offense	11%	11%	32%	24%

## DYRS Victims of Homicide FY2008-FY2011

Fiscal Year	Total DYRS population (# of youth)	DYRS youth who were victims of homicide (# of youth)	% of DYRS population that were victims of homicide
2008	911	6	0.7%
2009	1165	3	0.3%
2010	1302	11	0.8%
2011	1269	9	0.7%

## DYRS Youth Charged with Homicide FY2007-FY2011

Fiscal Year	Total DYRS population (#of youth)	DYRS youth charged with homicide (# of youth)	% of DYRS population charged with homicide	Youth adjudicated guilty	Youth adjudicated not guilty	Cases still pending
2007	541	8	1.5%	4 (50%)	4 (50%)	0 (0%)
2008	911	8	0.9%	2 (25%)	6 (75%)	0 (0%)
2009	1165	7	0.6%	4 (57%)	0 (0%)	3 (43%)
2010	1302	18	1.4%	9 (50%)	2 (11%)	7 (39%)
2011	1269	7	0.6%	1 (14%)	0 (0%)	6 (86%)



In any given year, the vast majority of DYRS committed youth—close to 99%—are neither homicide victims nor alleged perpetrators of a homicide. Of the 1,269 youth committed to DYRS in FY2011, nine (0.7%) were victims of homicide in FY2011. A similarly small portion of all DYRS committed youth are arrested for homicide each year. In FY2011 there were 1,269 youth committed to DYRS, and seven of these youth (0.6%) were charged with homicide.

On average, there is an 18 month delay between the time an individual is arrested for homicide and the time the charge is adjudicated. As a result, many of the youth charged with homicide between FY2007 and FY2011 are still awaiting trial. Of the 48 DYRS youth arrested for homicide during those years, 16 youth (33%) are still awaiting trial. At this time there is not enough data to draw conclusions about conviction rates for DYRS youth charged with homicide. The agency will be able to shed additional light on the conviction rates for DYRS youth charged with homicide once pending cases are resolved.

## Abscondence

Young people are on abscondence whenever they are not where they are supposed to be as agreed to in a Community Placement Agreement, an agreement issued between the young person and DYRS stating that the young person can return to the community, provided they adhere to their supervision and treatment plan. Examples of abscondence include a young person living

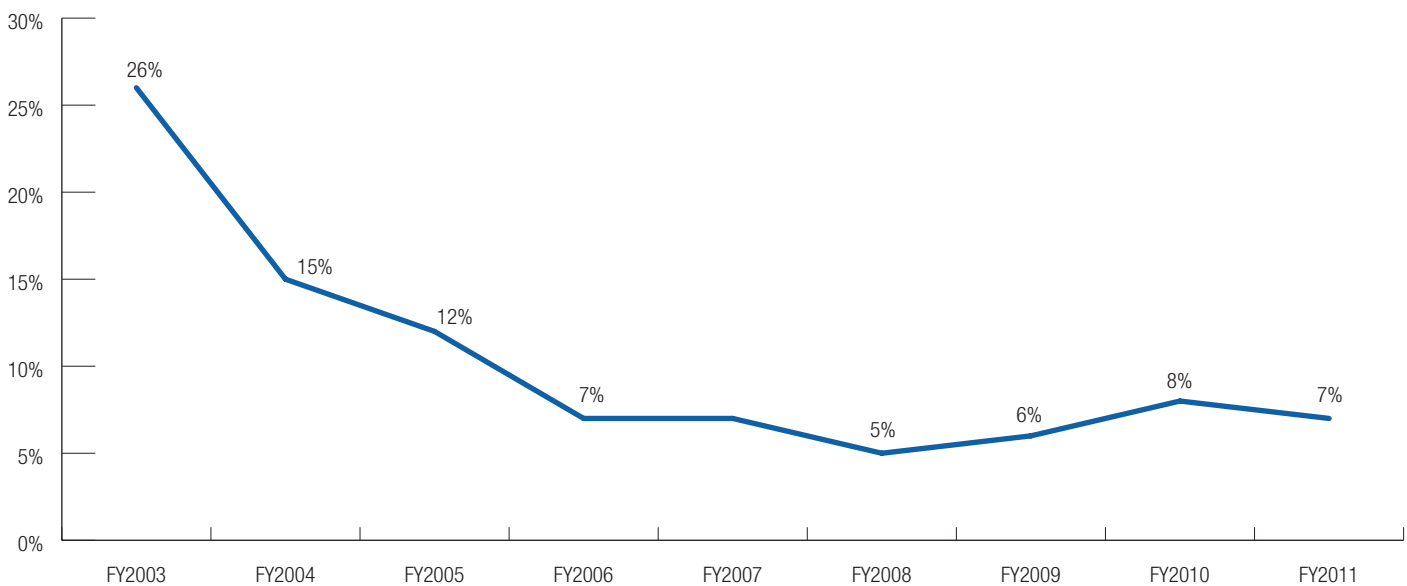
at home who has stopped keeping close contact with his or her Case Manager, or a youth who has not returned by curfew to a community-based residential facility (CBRF).

When either DYRS or CBRF staff find that a young person is on abscondence, a Custody Order is requested from the court. MPD and the DYRS Abscondence Unit is tasked to bring the young person into custody.

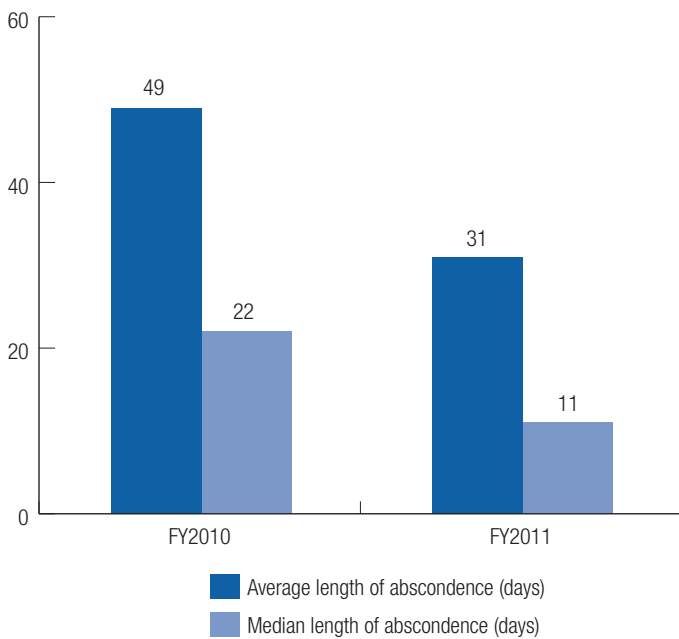
In 2003, the year before the Establishment Act for DYRS was signed, 26% of youth under the District’s supervision were on abscondence status each day. The new agency made abscondence an immediate and permanent priority, and by FY2010 the rate had dropped to 8.1%. In FY2011, DYRS continued to work closely with partner agencies, including MPD and OAG, to find youth on abscondences and bring them back into custody as fast as possible. The abscondence rate in FY2011 was 6.1%, a 25% decrease since FY2010. On average, 17 fewer youth are on abscondence per day in FY2011 than in FY2010, and the median length of abscondence dropped by half, from 22 days to 11 days.

Females and younger youth are over-represented in the population of youth who abscond. In 2011, 15% of absconders were female and 55% were under 18. For the overall DYRS population in 2011, only one youth in ten was female, and fewer than half were under 18. Similarly, for DYRS youth placed in the community during 2011, a little over one in ten youth were female and fewer than half were under 18.

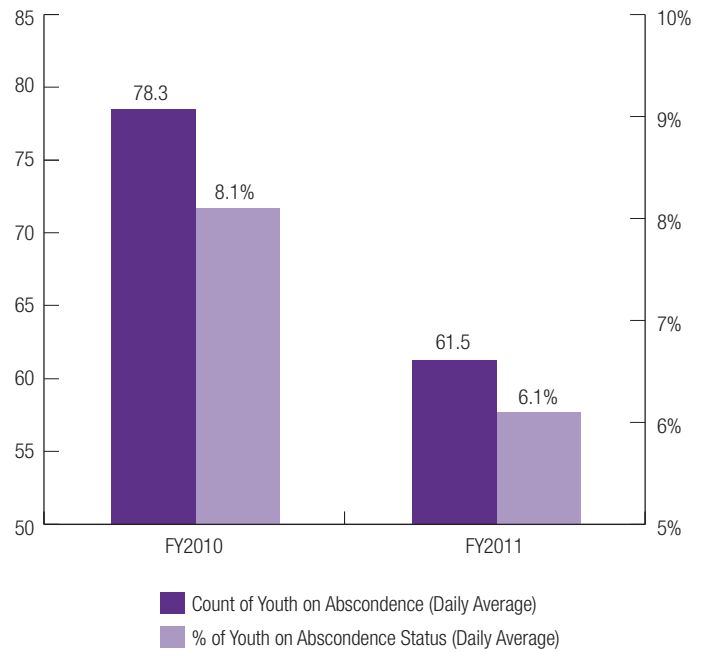
### Abscondence Rates FY2003-FY2011



### Average Length of Abscondence FY2010-FY2011



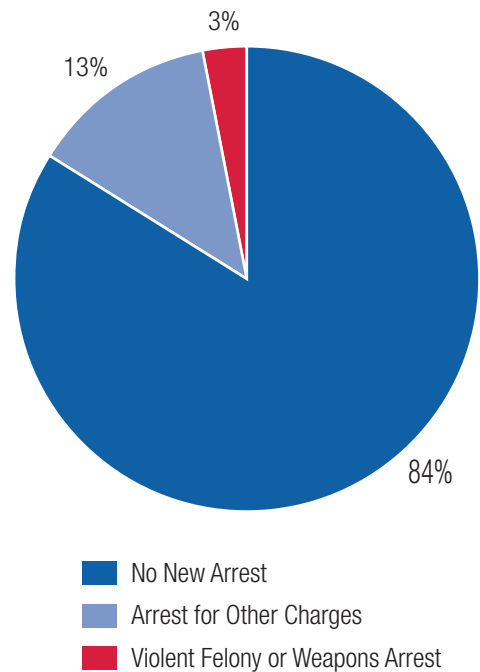
### Average Daily Population of Youth on Abscondence FY2010-FY2011



### Profile of Absconders in 2011

Under 18	55%
Over 18	45%
Male	85%
Female	15%

### Outcome of Abscondences in FY2011



It is a public safety concern when a young person under DYRS supervision is not where he or she is supposed to be. In most instances, however, the young person's location is identified and he or she is brought back under agency supervision without any new arrest. Over the course of 2011, 84% of youth were re-located without further incident. Relatively few youth – just 3% – were arrested for a violent felony or weapons charge while on abscondence.

# Public Safety in DYRS Facilities

In addition to protecting public safety within the community, DYRS engages in a number of strategies to improve safety within the agency's secure and community-based facilities. This section highlights two of these initiatives, the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) and the Performance-based Standards (PbS) program.

## Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative

The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) is a reform initiative launched by the Annie E. Casey Foundation that is aimed at improving the secure detention process in the juvenile justice system.<sup>6</sup> The objectives of JDAI include eliminating the inappropriate or unnecessary use of secure confinement, improving public safety by minimizing re-arrests and failure to appear rates, ensuring appropriate conditions of confinement in secure facilities, redirecting public finances to sustain successful reforms, and reducing racial and ethnic disparities. To achieve these goals, JDAI sites pursue eight interrelated core strategies:

- Collaboration between juvenile justice agencies, other governmental entities, and community organizations.
- Use of accurate data to diagnose systemic problems and to assess the impact of reforms.
- Developing objective admissions criteria and instruments.

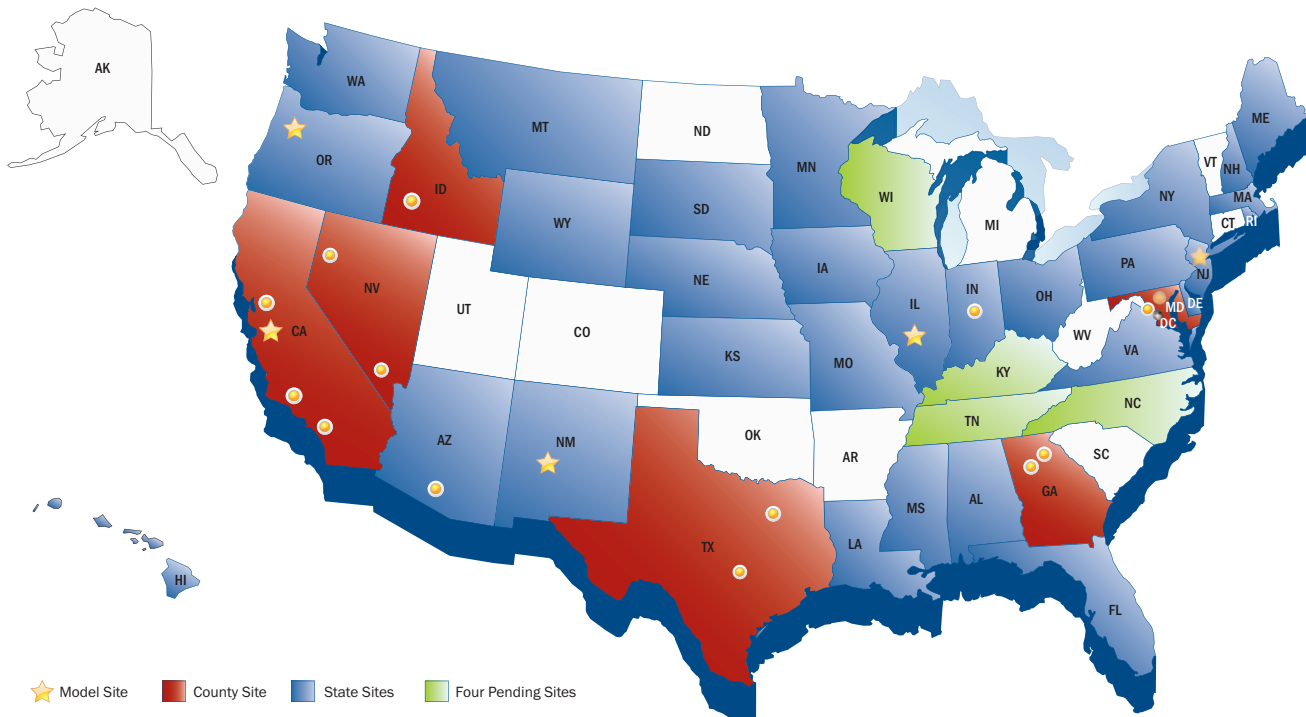
## Praise for JDAI

*“The Juvenile Detention Initiative, an Annie E. Casey Foundation reform initiative, demonstrates that jurisdictions can safely reduce reliance on secure detention by employing objective risk-screening instruments, nonsecure alternatives to detention, expedited case processing, and other strategies tailored to maximize the strengths of families and local communities.”*

—Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR). (2009). *Supporting Youth in Transition to Adulthood: Lessons Learned from Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice*.

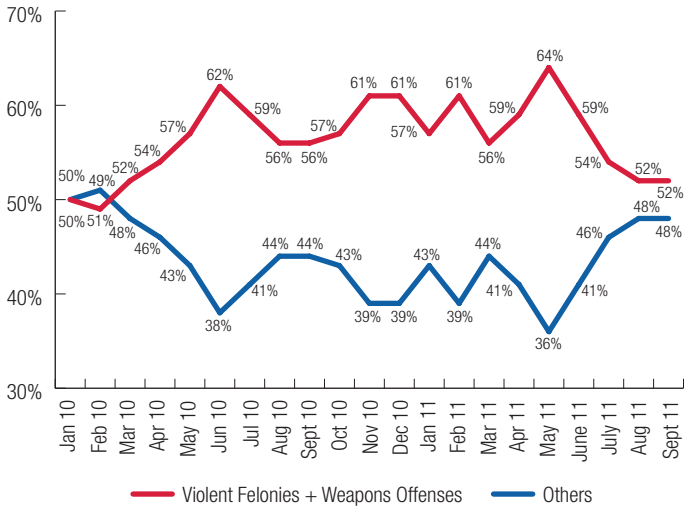
- Implementing new or enhanced non-secure alternatives to detention.
- Reforming case processing to expedite the flow of cases through the system.
- Re-examining special detention cases, such as youth placed in custody due to probation violations.
- Engaging in strategies to reduce racial disparities.
- Improving conditions of confinement through routine inspection and rigorous protocols.

## 2012 JDAI Sites

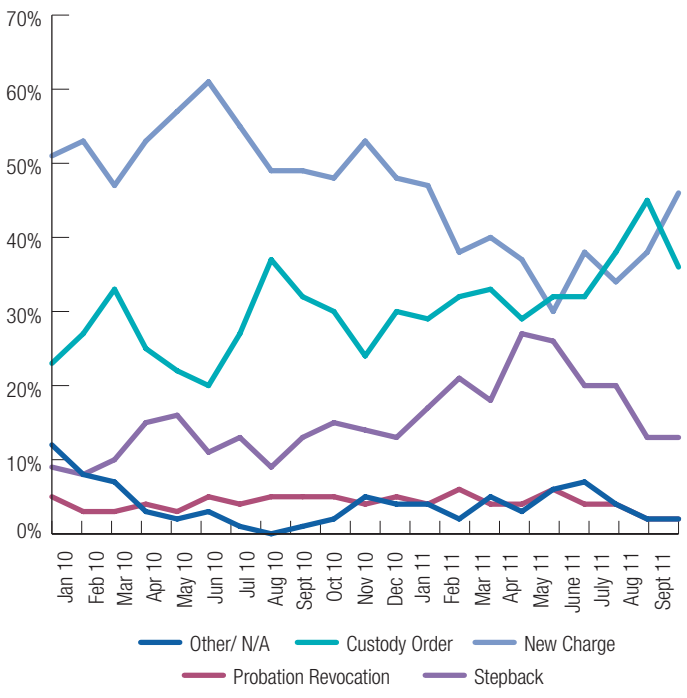


As of early FY2012, there were JDAI sites in 35 states and the District of Columbia, with four additional states pending. JDAI was launched in the District in 2005 and involves collaboration between DYRS, CSS, OAG, MPD, CJCC, and the Public Defender Service (PDS).

### YSC Primary Charged Offense % by Month January 2010-September 2011



### YSC Admission Reason per Month January 2010-September 2011

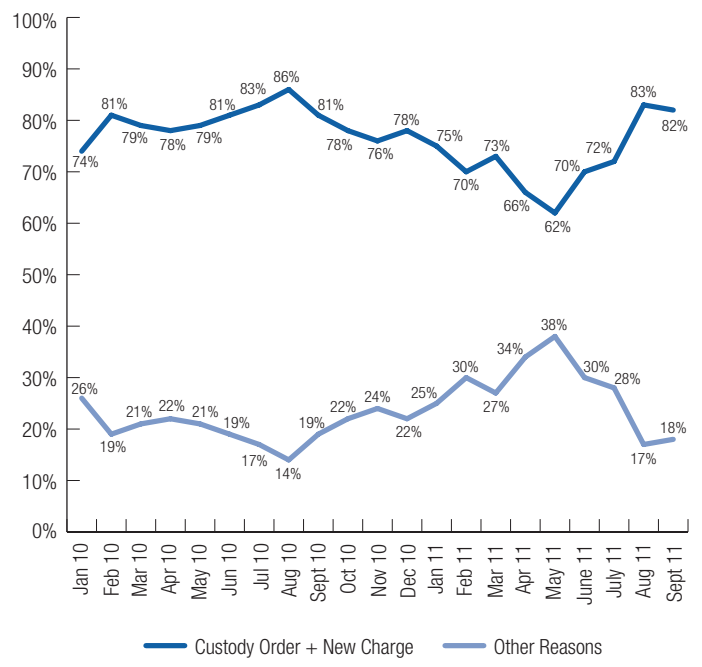


### Performance of Detention Alternatives

When appropriate, DC Superior Court judges place detained youth in an alternative to secure detention. On an average daily basis, approximately 62% of detained youth are placed at a detention alternative, with the other 38% placed at YSC. There are two categories of detention alternatives: Youth Shelter Homes and Intensive Third-Party Monitoring (ITPM). Youth placed in shelter homes have an overnight bed and are monitored daily by the shelter home staff. Youth receiving ITPM supervision remain in the family home but are monitored through their specific services.

Almost 1,000 youth stayed at DYRS detention alternatives in FY2011. The primary purposes of the detention alternative program are to ensure that youth show up on time to their scheduled court appointment and remain crime free while their court case is being processed.<sup>7</sup> In FY2011, 93% of DYRS youth completed their detention alternative without a re-arrest or failure to appear. This percentage was consistent with DYRS' performance in FY2010.

### YSC Admission Reason per Month January 2010-September 2011



### Impact of JDAI at YSC

Diverting lower-risk youth to detention alternatives has helped to free up space at YSC for more serious, violent offenders. The percentage of YSC admissions due to violent felony offenses rose from 24% in January 2010 to 37% by the end of FY2011. By the end of FY2011, 52% of all YSC enrollments were due to violent felonies and weapons offenses combined.

Most YSC enrollments in FY2011 resulted from either a custody order or a new charge. Although the percentage of enrollments due to a new charge has decreased somewhat since 2010, it remains, along with custody orders, one of the primary reasons for admission to YSC.

By the end of FY2011, 82% of all new YSC enrollments resulted from a custody order or new charge. This statistic has remained relatively stable over the 19 months studied; aside from a temporary dip between February 2011 and July 2011, the percentage of all youth enrolled due to new charge or custody order has typically remained between 75% and 85%. This temporary dip could be due in part to an increase in enrollments resulting from stepbacks from community placements.

## Performance-Based Standards



Through the PbS initiative, a program administered by CJCA, DYRS benchmarks its performance against juvenile justice facilities in similar jurisdictions. Bi-annually, DYRS submits to PbS performance data on upwards of 100 performance indicators at each of its two secure detention facilities, and then receives a performance report from CJCA measuring DYRS performance against the field averages for each performance area.

The data collected by PbS is grouped into seven domains: safety, order, security, programming, justice, health, and reintegration. These domains capture information on, among other things, the intake process, educational evaluations, assaults, hours of engagement, and staff-to-youth ratios. The rigorous data collection process occurs in one-month intervals twice a year, in April and October. These cycles generate facility reports that document how a facility compares to the generalized field average across each particular performance indicator. Overall scores are aggregated for each facility, culminating in a four tier rating system:

- **Level I:** facilities credited with a valid data collection system.
- **Level II:** facilities having not only good data collection, but also having 85% of 'critical outcome' measures at or above the field average.
- **Level III:** facilities having 85% of all measures registered at or above the field average.
- **Level IV:** facilities that are at or above the field average in all PbS measures.

Currently, 27 states, as well as the District of Columbia, participate in PbS, generating data from 198 secure facilities. The facilities, including YSC and New Beginnings, participate as independent entities, each receiving a stand-alone evaluation; the District does not receive an overall score.

## DYRS' PbS Performance to Date

DYRS' participation in PbS dates to October 2009. During the first two data collection cycles both YSC and New Beginnings were considered to be in 'candidacy phase,' a precursor to the Level system. In October 2010, the two facilities achieved Level I status, affirming that the data collection processes were sufficiently valid to be included in field-average calculations.

In April of 2011, data collection processes improved at New Beginnings, as did outcomes. As a result, the facility was elevated to Level II. By October 2011, both YSC and New Beginnings were operating as Level II facilities.

## PbS Safety and Security Outcomes in DYRS Secure Facilities

Youth development requires, as a prerequisite, a safe and secure environment. DYRS evaluates the safety and security of the two facilities it operate—New Beginnings and YSC – by benchmarking incident rates against like facilities nationwide through the PbS initiative.

## New Beginnings

The safety and security evaluation at New Beginnings had a strong positive trajectory in FY2011. Between April and October of 2011, it surpassed the field average in lowering injuries to youth, mechanical restraint usage, use of isolation or room confinement, and in the average duration of room confinements. Also noteworthy, the ratio of youth to staff at New Beginnings is nearly double the field average for like facilities. The facility has targeted its rate of assaults and fights for improvement in 2012.

## Youth Services Center

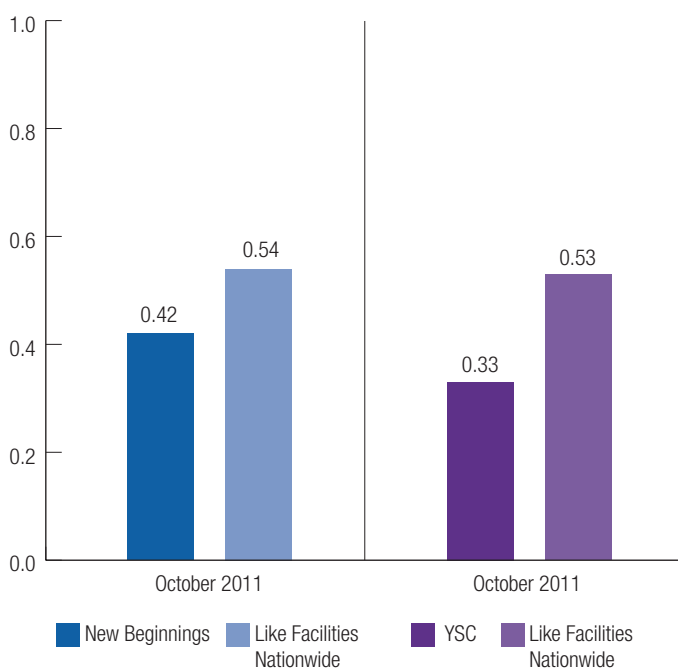
YSC also saw significant improvements over the course of 2011. In the April data collection, the facility experienced data collection challenges that undermined some of the facility's findings. By October, those data collection problems had been rectified. In that month, YSC had fewer injuries and shorter isolations than like facilities. Like New Beginnings, YSC has also targeted its assault rate for improvement in 2012.



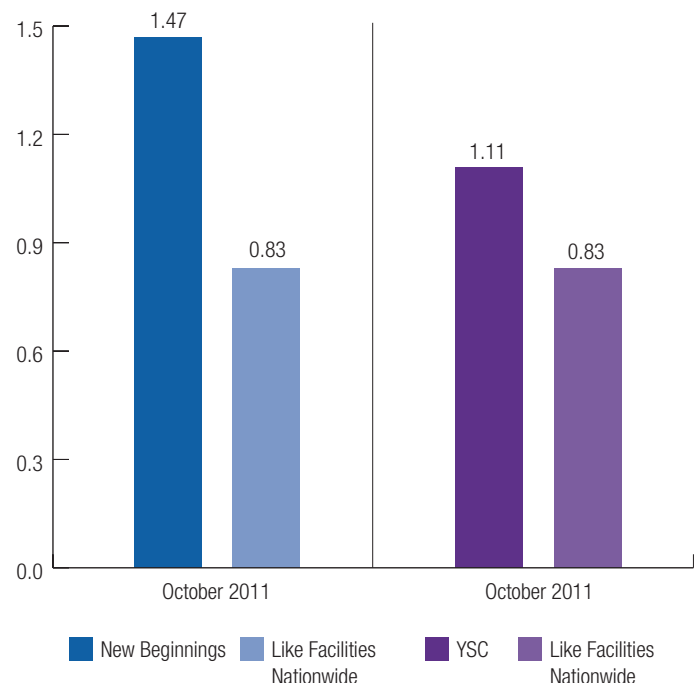
## 2011 PbS Safety Outcomes for New Beginnings and YSC, as Compared to Like Facilities Nationwide

	New Beginnings				YSC			
	April 2011		October 2011		April 2011		October 2011	
	NB	Like Facilities Nationwide	NB	Like Facilities Nationwide	YSC	Like Facilities Nationwide	YSC	Like Facilities Nationwide
Injuries to youth per 100 person-days of youth confinement	0.91	0.56	0.42	0.54	0.10	0.40	0.33	0.53
Assaults and fights on youth per 100 person-days of youth confinement	0.96	0.38	0.60	0.47	0.19	0.40	0.57	0.32
Physical restraint use per 100 person-days of youth confinement	5.25	0.76	2.60	0.80	-	0.70	1.75	1.09
Mechanical restraint use per 100 person-days of youth confinement	0.28	0.71	0.30	0.85	0.00	0.13	0.00	0.33
Isolation, room confinement, segregation/special management unit use per 100 person-days of youth confinement	0.57	0.55	0.48	1.33	-	3.32	5.94	4.66
Average duration of isolation, room confinement, and segregation/special management in hours	6.77	73.08	3.01	13.61	-	4.25	1.58	5.14
Average daily ratio of direct care staff to youth during the collection month	1.31	0.79	1.47	0.83	1.43	0.90	1.11	0.83

### Injuries to Youth per 100 Person-Days of Youth Confinement



### Average Daily Ratio of Direct Care Staff to Youth During the Collection Month



# Looking Forward to 2012

In FY2011, DYRS made significant progress in expanding its strategies to target public safety concerns. Over the coming fiscal year, DYRS will continue its efforts to protect public safety in and around the District, targeting the following areas for improvement:

- ▲ Reducing youth recidivism
- ▲ Reducing abscondences rates
- ▲ Improving oversight of the District's community-based residential facilities

Through each of these endeavors, DYRS is committed to reducing the likelihood that youth will re-offend, assisting successful community reintegration, and protecting the safety and welfare of the greater community.

## Endnotes

- 1 Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators. (2009). *Defining and Measuring Recidivism*, 29 (emphasis in original).
- 2 Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice. (2005). *Juvenile recidivism in Virginia*. DJJ Research Quarterly. Richmond, VA:VDJJ.
- 3 Snyder, H.N., & Sickmund, M. (2006). *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2006 National Report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- 4 Caseworkers for particular youth are generally notified by staff in neighboring jurisdictions when their youth are arrested so this information is used for case management purposes, but this data is not part of the agency's recidivism database because it does not meet the threshold of validity needed for inclusion.
- 5 Elliott, D. S. (1994). *Serious Violent Offenders: Onset, Developmental Course, and Termination*. The American Society of Criminology 1993 Presidential Address. *Criminology*, Volume 32, Number 1.
- 6 The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/JuvenileDetentionAlternativesInitiative.aspx>.
- 7 One of DYRS' Key Performance Indicators is the 'Percent of youth completing detention alternatives without re-arrest or failure to appear in court.'